

~~SECRET~~

25X1



12 July 1951

Dissemination Authorized  
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR,  
OFFICE OF CURRENT INTELLIGENCE



25X1

Copy No. 14

*AS*  
*10/1/51*

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

Document No. 21  
 No Change in Class.   
 Declassified  
 Class. Changed To: TS S C  
 Auth.: HR 70-2  
 Date: 20 July 78 By:

25X1

Office of Current Intelligence

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

Intelligence Memorandum

Analysis of the Recent Coup d'Etat Attempt in Thailand

25X1

The consequences of the abortive coup d'etat are quickly becoming apparent. The government is already inflicting severe punishment on the navy; many senior naval officers have been retired, dismissed or imprisoned and others are scheduled for similar disciplinary action. The navy's personnel strength has been reduced by three-fourths, and naval activities have been placed under army command pending a general reorganization by a 12-man committee, only one member of which is a naval officer. For the present, at least, the navy has been eliminated as an effective political or military force in Thailand.

Army and police influence over the government, on the other hand, has been greatly increased; and the airforce, hitherto without much political power, is likely to assume a more important role in Thai affairs as a result of its successful bombing of naval installations. The government will undoubtedly be subject to an even more dictatorial control by the military than it was formerly.

The "victorious" generals, however, have not yet seized the government. Although Phibun's position undoubtedly has been weakened, his political acumen and his ability to maintain a delicate balance among numerous rival political and military elites may prevent him from being deposed. It is quite possible that his authority will gradually be restored as a result of the development of rivalries among or within the various military groups. In this connection, Phibun's control of the government is essential to insure the continuance of Thailand's policy of extremely close cooperation with the US and strong support of the UN.

- 2 -

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

Although the Communists in Thailand, mostly resident Chinese, have not as yet involved themselves in the recent events, they may be expected to take advantage of the deepened political cleavages and exploit a number of propaganda possibilities to discredit the government in the eyes of the people. While there is little danger of a pro-Communist government emerging in the immediate future, loss of popular respect for the government in Thailand would facilitate Communist penetration among the Thai people, who have heretofore almost completely resisted Communism's appeal.

Although order has been restored to Thailand, lasting stability has not necessarily been achieved. Some observers believe that the navy will not accept near destruction without further resistance, possibly in the form of guerrilla operations or by attempted assassinations of those chiefly responsible for the navy's defeat. The navy is currently incapable of developing as a serious threat to the government, but the large number of unemployed, disgruntled navy men, many possessing extensive military training, offers the Communists and other dissatisfied elements excellent targets for future exploitation. A much greater and more immediate threat to Thai stability is the possibility of a struggle for dominance among the ruling generals. A new coup effort could easily develop from such a struggle. [redacted] the forces which joined against the navy are not altogether firm supporters of the Phibun regime and certain groups could be utilized by other aspirants for control of Thailand at some opportune moment in the future. Should Phibun be deposed, or should he fail to maintain a balance of power between the military and police leaders, the resultant struggle might well cause the disintegration of the Thai governmental system.

25X1

- 3 -

~~SECRET~~